

ENERGY COMMITTEE 2012

This year the Plainfield Energy Committee continued the work initiated in 2011 - most importantly the energy assessments of town buildings and analysis of our street light systems. The grant-funded energy audits of Plainfield Library, Meriden Town Hall and Town Garage were completed and the full text of each is available on the Energy Committee page of our town website.

A subcommittee of the PEC, led by Mike O'Leary and including Allan Ferguson, Ron Eberhardt and Nancy Mogielnicki, addressed the audit recommendations, beginning with the Meriden Town Hall. Based on the audit and further work by engineer Margaret Dillon, the subcommittee has completed an extensive inspection of the building and conferred with a variety of contractors to get advice and estimates regarding lighting, heating, air sealing, insulation, window and door work.

We have developed a wish list of relatively small projects which will increase the energy efficiency of the building while also enhancing the comfort level for our town staff and police.

We have also developed a list of future projects, bigger in scope and cost. At some point the MTH 15 year old oil-fired boiler will fail. We are hoping to have reduced the energy needs of the building so that it can be replaced by a more energy efficient alternative heating system when the need arises. Upgrading the insulation under the building will help in that regard as will rehabilitation of the beautiful historic but leaky windows. All information regarding MTH energy data, audits, contractor estimates, and specifications of potential products are available in a notebook at the Town Hall

The committee has continued to analyze the streetlight systems in town, building on the mapping done by Wendy James, Thom Wolke and Mike O'Leary in 2011 and looking for opportunities for energy and dollar savings. We were disappointed to find that neither National Grid (Meriden lights) nor PSNH (Plainfield Village lights) had a plan for LED upgrades. However, we did find that PSNH offered a low cost "Midnight Streetlights" option- related to our maintenance cycle- that would install timers so that selected lights could be turned off at midnight. A hearing called by the Selectboard on May 16th revealed that Plainfield Village neighbors were united in their desire to keep the lights on all night, so the program offer was not pursued.

The PEC will continue to look for incentives to upgrade lighting, with decisions about change ultimately coming from those affected. A summary of our town lighting systems is available on the Energy Committee page of the town website.

Dave Taylor has continued to provide useful and interesting "Energy Tips" through the Plain Facts. Please contact him with ideas for future columns.

There are always more projects on the drawing board than there are in progress. We welcome new members at any time!

Submitted by
Nancy Mogielnicki, Chair